

**Request for Comments**

The Coast Guard encourages interested parties to comment on this temporary deviation. You may submit written data, views, or arguments relating this schedule during the test period. Persons submitting comments should include their names and addresses, identify this temporary deviation (CGD05-99-034) and the particular part of this deviation to which each comment applies, and the reason for each comment. The Coast Guard requests that all comments and attachments be submitted in an unbound format suitable for copying and electronic filing. Persons wanting acknowledgment of receipt of comments should enclose a stamped self-addressed postcard or envelope.

The Coast Guard will consider all comments received during the comment period. The Coast Guard plans no public hearing. You may request a public hearing by writing to the Commander, Fifth Coast Guard District, at the address under **ADDRESSES**. The request should include reasons why a hearing would be helpful. If the Coast Guard decides to hold a public hearing, we will announce the hearing in a separate notice in the **Federal Register**.

The drawbridge across Mullica River is owned and operated by Atlantic County, New Jersey. On September 3, 1998, the Coast Guard received a letter from Atlantic County requesting a temporary deviation from the normal operation of the bridge. They wanted to test a proposed change to the current regulations for the Green Bank Drawbridge by changing the opening schedule to openings on the hour and half hour for recreational and commercial vessels. The current regulation at Title 33, Code of Federal Regulations Section 117.731a(b), requires the draw to open on signal, except from April 1 through November 30, from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m., and from December 1 through March 31, at all times, a four-hour notice is required.

The temporary deviation will change the periods of opening on signal to openings on the hour and half hour for a period of 90 days. The temporary deviation will not alter sections 117.731a (b) and (c), of the Code of Federal Regulations, which states that the draw need not open unless at least a four-hour notice is given from April 1, through November 30, 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. and December 1 through March 31, at all times. The draws shall open as soon

as possible during periods when four-hour notice is required for vessels in distress, public vessels of the United States, and state and local vessels used for public safety purposes.

Following the temporary deviation, the Coast Guard will review drawbridge logs and vehicular traffic counts to determine how the opening schedule met the needs of navigation and vehicular traffic.

Beginning August 15, 1999, and continuing until November 13, 1999, this deviation requires the bridge to open for recreational and commercial vessels on the hour and half hour, 24 hours a day. The four hour minimum notification period for vessels seeking to transit between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. remains in effect during the deviation period.

Dated: June 24, 1999.

**Thomas E. Bernard,**

*Captain, Coast Guard, Fifth Coast Guard District, Acting District Commander.*

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**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Coast Guard****33 CFR Part 117**

**[CGD08-99-011]**

**Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Inner Harbor Navigation Canal, LA**

**AGENCY:** Coast Guard, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of deviation from regulations.

**SUMMARY:** The Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District has issued a temporary deviation from the regulation governing the operation of the Florida Avenue bascule span drawbridge across the Inner Harbor Navigational Canal, mile 1.7 at New Orleans, Orleans Parish, Louisiana. This deviation allows the draw of the Florida Avenue bascule span drawbridge to remain closed to navigation daily from 8 a.m. until noon and from 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. from September 23, 1999 through November 6, 1999. This temporary deviation will allow for replacement of the damaged fender system, an extensive but necessary maintenance operation. Presently, the draw opens on signal at all times.

**DATES:** This deviation is effective from 8 a.m. on September 23, 1999 through 5 p.m. on November 6, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Unless otherwise indicated, documents referred to in this notice are available for inspection or copying at the office of the Eighth Coast Guard District, Bridge Administration Branch, Hale Boggs Federal Building, room 1313, 501 Magazine Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70130-3396 between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The Bridge Administration Branch of the Eighth Coast Guard District maintains the public docket for this temporary deviation.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Phil Johnson, Bridge Administration Branch, at the address given above, telephone (504) 589-2965.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

The Florida Avenue bascule span drawbridge across the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal, mile 1.7, in New Orleans, Louisiana has a vertical clearance of one foot above mean high water in the closed-to-navigation position and unlimited in the open-to-navigation position. Navigation on the waterway consists of tugs with tows, small ships, fishing vessels, sailing vessels and other recreational craft. The Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans requested a temporary deviation for the operation of the drawbridge to accommodate maintenance work, involving removing portions of the existing damaged fender system, driving new pilings and replacing the timbers. This work is essential for continued safe transit of vessels through the bridge.

The District Commander has, therefore, issued a deviation from the regulations in 33 CFR 117.5 authorizing the draw of the Florida Avenue bascule span drawbridge to remain closed to navigation from 8 a.m. until noon and from 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. daily from September 23, 1999 through November 6, 1999. In the event of an approaching tropical storm or hurricane, the draw will return to normal operation within 12 hours notice from the Coast Guard. Presently, the draw opens on signal at any time.

Dated: May 7, 1999.

**A.L. Gerfin, Jr.,**

*Captain, U.S. Coast Guard, Commander, 8th Coast Guard Dist., Acting.*

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